

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are pending in this application.

By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended for better clarity.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments:

(a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration as the amendments merely clarify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; and (c) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

Applicants thank Examiner Mayes for the courtesy extended to Applicants' representative, Mr. Luo, during the May 16, 2006 personal interview. The substance of the personal interview is incorporated in the following remarks.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over JP-A-2001-300922 ("JP-922") in view of either U.S. Patent No. 4,740,408 to Mochida et al. ("Mochida"), U.S. Patent No. 4,810,554 to Hattori et al. ("Hattori"), or U.S. Patent No. 6,159,431 to Inoue et al. ("Inoue"), and/or further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,557,773 to Bonzo ("Bonzo"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 is amended for better clarity, as outlined above. As discussed during the personal interview, the applied references do not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in claim 1.

In particular, claim 1 is amended to clarify that the holes of the other cells are drilled by use of only the at least one reference cell as a reference point. The references only disclose that the hole of a cell is drilled by referencing to the location of the hole of the cell itself. Thus, the applied references do not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in claim 1.

Claims 2-11 are each patentable in view of the patentability of claim 1, from which they depend, as well as for additional features they recite. For example, the applied references do not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in claim 8.

In particular, the applied references do not disclose or suggest dividing the other cells into a plurality of blocks in such a manner as to include one of the at least one reference cell in each block; and drilling the holes for each of the blocks, recited in claim 8.

In particular, JP-922 discloses making a hole 5 at a position corresponding to a specified cell 3 of a sheet 4. See Figs. 3A and 3B, and paragraph 0011. However, JP-922 does not disclose or suggest dividing the other cells into a plurality of blocks in such a manner as to include one of the at least one reference cell in each block; and drilling the holes for each of the blocks.

Mochida discloses cells 4 with fins 3. See Fig 1. As acknowledged in the Office Action, the fins 3 are used only to eliminate the occurrence of accelerated deterioration of the central body portion which tends to hamper efficient purification of combustion gas. See col. 3, lines 10-48. Mochida does not disclose or suggest dividing the other cells into a plurality of blocks in such a manner as to include one of the at least one reference cell in each block; and drilling the holes for each of the blocks.

Hattori discloses a structure in which the shape of the holes in the central part is different from those at the periphery. See Figs. 4 and 5, and col. 2, line 62 - col. 3, line 20. As admitted in the Office Action, such a configuration is only to strengthen the ceramic honeycomb. Hattori does not disclose or suggest dividing the other cells into a plurality of blocks in such a manner as to include one of the at least one reference cell in each block; and drilling the holes for each of the blocks.

Inoue discloses a ceramic honeycomb having two zones, with one of the two zones having a reinforcement portion on each corner part of an open-ended cell. See Figs. 1 and 2,

and col. 3, lines 12-42. As acknowledged in the Office Action, such a reinforcement portion is merely for sufficient mechanical strength. Inoue does not disclose or suggest dividing the other cells into a plurality of blocks in such a manner as to include one of the at least one reference cell in each block; and drilling the holes for each of the blocks.

Bonzo discloses a method for selectively bulk charging cells of a honeycomb structure. See col. 3, lines 56-59. Bonzo does not disclose or suggest dividing the other cells into a plurality of blocks in such a manner as to include one of the at least one reference cell in each block; and drilling the holes for each of the blocks.

In view of the above, Mochida, Hattori, Inoue and Bonzo do not supply the subject matter lacking in JP-922. Thus, JP-922, Mochida, Hattori, Inoue and Bonzo, either individually or in combination, do not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in claim 8.

For at least the above reasons, the applied references do not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in claims 1 and 8, and claims 2-7 and 9-11 depending therefrom. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-11 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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